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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/45/851)]

45/212. Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 43/53 of 6 December 1988 and 44/207 of 22 December 1989, in which it recognized that climate change is a common concern of mankind, and urging Governments and, as appropriate, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions, to collaborate in a concerted effort with the aim of preparing, as a matter of urgency, a framework convention on climate change, and other related instruments, containing appropriate commitments for action to combat climate change and its adverse effects, taking into account the most up-to-date, sound scientific knowledge and any existing uncertainties, as well as the particular needs and development priorities of developing countries,

Recalling also its resolution 44/206 of 22 December 1989 on the possible adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas,

Recalling further its resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Taking note of the relevant resolutions and decisions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and of the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization,

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Taking note also of the recommendations and decisions of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, adopted at its organizational session 1/ and at its first session, 2/

Noting the important work accomplished by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has completed its first assessment report,

Noting also the relevant conclusions and recommendations on climate change adopted at various intergovernmental meetings during 1990,

Noting further the fact that the largest part of the current emission of pollutants into the environment originates in developed countries, and recognizing therefore that those countries have the main responsibility for combating such pollution,

Welcoming the fact that several countries and a regional economic integration organization have already taken measures or made specific commitments to address the problem of climate change and its effects through the stabilization and/or reduction of environmentally harmful emissions of greenhouse gases, and that other countries are contemplating doing so,

Noting that, pursuant to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 44/207, resolution 4 (EC-XLII) of 22 June 1990 of the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization and decision SS.II/3 of 3 August 1990, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its second special session, 3/ an Ad Hoc Working Group of Government Representatives to prepare for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change met at Geneva from 24 to 26 September 1990 and adopted a number of recommendations, 4/

Recognizing the continuing need for scientific research into the sources and effects of climate change and its possible adverse impact, including the socio-economic consequences, and the effectiveness of possible response strategies, and recognizing also the importance of the active participation of developing countries and the need to assist and co-operate with them in climate-related research and action,

1. Decides to establish a single intergovernmental negotiating process under the auspices of the General Assembly, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, for the preparation by an

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1/ See A/44/48 and Corr.1 and 2.

2/ See A/45/46.

3/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 25, annex.

4/ A/45/696, annex I.

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of an effective framework convention on climate change, containing appropriate commitments, and any related instruments as might be agreed upon, taking into account proposals that may be submitted by States participating in the negotiating process, the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the results achieved at international meetings on the subject, including the Second World Climate Conference;

2. Decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee should be open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly;

3. Welcomes the organization of a broad-based preparatory process at the national level involving, as appropriate, the scientific community, industry, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and other interested groups;

4. Decides that the first negotiating session should be held in Washington, D.C., in February 1991 and that, subject to review of the timetable at the end of each negotiating session and taking into account the schedule of other intergovernmental meetings on environment and development matters, in particular the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, further meetings should be held at Geneva and at Nairobi, in May/June, September and November/December 1991 and, as appropriate, between January and June 1992;

5. Authorizes the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the assistance of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, pending the establishment of an ad hoc secretariat for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, to convene, exceptionally, the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, to be held in Washington, D.C., in February 1991; the subsequent sessions of the Committee shall be convened by the ad hoc secretariat;

6. Decides that the maximum duration of each of the negotiating sessions should be two weeks;

7. Considers that the negotiations for the preparation of an effective framework convention on climate change, containing appropriate commitments, and any related legal instruments as might be agreed upon, should be completed prior to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 and opened for signature during the Conference;

8. Reaffirms the principles embodied in its resolutions 44/207 and 44/228, which take into account the concerns of all States and the specific needs of developing countries;

9. Takes account of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Second World Climate Conference, held at Geneva from 29 October to 7 November 1990; 5/

5/ A/45/696/Add.1, annex III.

10. Decides to establish a special voluntary fund, administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat under the authority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to ensure that developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, as well as small island developing countries, are able to participate fully and effectively in the negotiating process, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations to contribute generously to the fund;

11. Recommends that, at the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, to be held in Washington, D.C., a Bureau consisting of a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur shall be elected, each of the five regional groups being represented by one member;

12. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, as well as with the executive heads of United Nations bodies with expertise in the field of development, to establish as soon as possible at Geneva an ad hoc secretariat of appropriate size and quality, consisting mainly of Professional staff of the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, taking into account the need to ensure that the work programmes of those two organizations are not negatively affected, to be co-ordinated by those two organizations in consultation and co-operation with the head of the ad hoc secretariat and supplemented by staff from other bodies of the United Nations system, as appropriate, in order to ensure that the ad hoc secretariat embodies the requisite technical expertise;

13. Decides that the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall appoint as head of the ad hoc secretariat a senior official of an appropriate level, who shall act under the guidance of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;

14. Requests the head of the ad hoc secretariat to co-operate closely with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to ensure that the Panel can respond to the needs and requests for objective scientific and technical advice made during the negotiating process;

15. Also requests the head of the ad hoc secretariat to make available, at the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, the first assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, including its paper on legal measures, as well as the background documentation prepared for the Panel, as inputs for the negotiations, together with the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference 5/ and other relevant documents;

16. Requests the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, through the ad hoc secretariat and taking into account the relevance of the negotiations to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to keep the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and the Secretary-General of the Conference, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, regularly informed in a timely manner, through regular progress reports, of the progress of the negotiations;

17. Also requests the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to take into account, as appropriate, any relevant developments in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that the Preparatory Committee may bring to its attention;

18. Requests the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, on behalf of the Committee, to submit a report to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 on the outcome of the negotiations, as well as on possible future steps in the field of climate change;

19. Invites relevant non-governmental organizations to make contributions to the negotiating process, as appropriate on the understanding that these organizations shall not have any negotiating role during the process, and taking into account decision 1/1 concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its first session; 6/

20. Decides that the negotiating process shall be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a trust fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations and administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat under the authority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

21. Invites the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including those in the field of development, to make appropriate contributions to the negotiating process, including its funding;

22. Invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations to contribute generously to the trust fund;

23. Requests the head of the ad hoc secretariat to prepare draft rules of procedure for consideration by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its first session;

24. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session a report on the progress of the negotiations;

25. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind".

71st plenary meeting
21 December 1990

6/ See A/45/46, annex I.